From John C. Buckley.
(Unfinished.)

North Chelmsford Nov 12. 59

125 Mr Garrison Sir— Your favor of yesterday has just come to hand. From Reading the claims which Channing sets up for humanity, "that every man, be his condition what it may, is great, and that the dignity of his nature sinks into insignificance all outward distinctions", I have been induced to try my hand at a brief sketch as illustrative of how entirely such claims are ignored by society. My wish was to show how society in its relations with the poor, and the poor in their relations with each other, tended to destroy all self respect, and deaden all sense of native dignity and worth; to show how much poverty is frowned down every where, and that people who have no wish to be uncivil, unconsciously become so, when no other claims than mere unadorned humanity are presented. In short to show that the same degree of courtesy will not be shown to two persons, one asking for a first and the other a second class accommodation of any sort. In this I am conscious that I have failed in doing justice to my own conceptions, but beg to submit to you what I have written as a sketch of scenes that are daily occurring on the Western rivers

Scenes upon the Mississippi

A board on the Invincible doth announce that the boat will leave positively this evening at 6 o'clock for Pittsburg and intermediate places. The same board announced the same fact yesterday, but as it is tacitly understood that they do not keep faith with the public unless it suits them to do so, only the unwary are deceived. They will doubtless make a merit of their promise, as they have nearly all their freight on board, and are using the utmost dispatch to get on the the remainder.

Negroes and white men, seemingly in unutterable confusion, push forward with heavy burdens; clerks stand on the wharf making entries of the freight, and the mates expedite the loading by drawing largely on an inexhaustible vocabulary of oaths and curses. Indeed they may be said rather to interlard their oaths with orders, than their orders with oaths. One scarcely knows which human nature is the more disparaged, the abject servility of the slave, or the outrageous defiance of every natural obligation human and divine, of his tyrant.

I sit down on a bale of cotton to wait for the starting of the boat, and watch the busy throng.

Men with baskets on their arms, and who seem to have taken to the business as a desperate resort, push you to one

trinkets tobacco ready made clothing &c of the flimsiest material and the highest prices; boys, with a strange mixture of the guilelessness of childrean, and the precocity of age press through the crowd, alternating their cry of cigars with some obscene expression, or forget, for a few moments their vocation in friendly scuffles with other boys; poverty stricken women, with flaxen hair, — inhabitants of a colder clime region — and who do not speak the language, appeal to you in touching and dumb show, to buy a little cages with little solitary white rabbits, in with red eyes, which it is painful to reprise if you even knew what to do with it. Misery selfishness and recklessness seems the prominent characteristics of such a scene.

The bell rings I go on board to enlarge my experience, and accommodate my limited means to a passage on deck.

Whatever regard may have been had for to the comfort of the cabin passengers, certainly not the slightest is shown for that of the deck; bags and molasses barrels crowd every part of it, the stern, or place assigned to deck passengers is accessible only by crawling and poising oneself over these at an elevation of three or four feet.

The rope is slowly cast off and the boat slowly recedes from the levee of St C. I cast about in quest of some convenient

place in which to dispose of myself, but such a place it is not easy to find. My efforts bring me in contact with several others similarly employed. Without any exception they seem men whom the world has used roughly, and their characters are doubtless unsuitable to the usage

The ceremony of becoming acquainted is of the simplest. The little party are huddled together on a corner by the cook house. Some seated on a chest, some on the guards of the boat, with certainly little regard to comfort and more to dignity. Questions are freely asked, and answers as freely given, as to where each had come from, where he was going to, his former condition and future prospects. They were emphatically strays and waifs floating about on the current of society. Each had his story of suffering, and fierce struggles to win an animal existance. One had taught laboring work on the plantations and had been hunted off by the dogs, had travelled many hundreds of miles without money, hungry by day and the woods his only shelter by night. Another had been lured by the promise of high pay to the upper Red river on guest of Pine knotts

had been beaten and abused by the Captain and Mates, had been defrauded of his pay, and put ashore to make his way to the settlements through interminable forests.

Would not the law, I asked, have seen your righted?

To Hell with the law, said he, savagely, what will the law do for me? I'll right myself with a bullet through one of their brains if I ever get a chance.

To speak savagely, by-the-way, seems a marked peculiarity of this man; to the civilest questions in the politest manner his answers are quick, ill-considered, insolent, and frequently profane. He seems to have a vague idea that every question is an insult and that he is bound to resent it. He gives one the idea of an animal that has always been baited, and therefore does not understand, or at least recieves with suspicion all friendly overtures. The world was against him and he was against the world

Up to this point, the conversation had been carried on a singular compound of low cunning and ignorance, ferocity and cowardice. It now became growling. One recollection in recalled to mind in a maundling spirit of regret— each plied a whiskey bottle a pleasant boarding house in Louisville where whiskey had been allowed to breakfast instead of coffee, and no

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extra charge made

While listening to the conversation, I was startled with a "get out of this wont you, or I'll help some of you.

A servile slinking away betrayed the abject spirit of men whose whole life had been trampled in the dust. The engineer probed aside such as could not get out of his way fast enough, and stooped over to raise the lid of the chest where I sat, entirely unable to comprehend what the matter could be.

Come you had better move off or I'll see if I can't move you.

O I see, I said, you want to get into this chest. Now if you had only have said so, and said it civilly I could not only have left your way, but left with pleasure.

In this remark I simply intended to assert myself, and let him see that men were not to be driven with impunity like dogs. He mistook my purpose, however, for banter, and without being well able to see me in the half obscured light, raised his hand to strike. In his eyes humane nature had no dignity and was entitled to no civility on the deck of a steamer boat. I felt, as I caught a place to lay down for the night, a revulsion of feelings and a depression of spirits that only Albion's inhumanity to man could, have caused

The little party had already scattered, and found resting places. They were disposed on the tops of casks and boxes, in every variety of uneasy attitude, each with his little bundle handkerchief under his head, and his coat thrown loosely over his shoulders. As I prepared to follow the general example, one of the prostrate figures called out in an under tone, Bill, if you have any money you had better look out for it or some of the deck hands will be round your pockets before morning, and if that is your hat you had better put it on and sleep in it, or you won't find it in the morning. Is it possible, said I, that men who sail ships are dishonorable enough to work can be dishonorable enough to steal?

Well you try them, said he, turning over on his uneasy bed, and muttering something not very complimentary to greenhorns in general, a quality that he seemed to hold in especial contempt.

For sometime I lay awake listening to the heavy monotonous beat of the engine, and thinking over the brutality of the engineer; at length nature became exhausted, and I fell into an uneasy slumber, and dreamed of robbery and murder the most aggravated forms of human misery pervaded my imagination. The hardness, and uneasiness

of my bed, however, a couple of sugar hogsheads, the cold draught through the boat, the noise of the engines, the hurrying to and fro of the deck hands, whose feet often came into dangerous proximity with my head, and whose every action seemed sinister after the report I had had of them, all conspired to forbid either a long or a refreshing sleep. A lamp threw a fitful gleam over the sleeping figures, as they writhed uneasily on their hard couches. I felt grateful for the light as the night would have been intolerable without it, and as I knew it to be our best security against violence. The light of the morning gleamed at length through the chinks and openings of the boat. I never felt it more welcome. as I was, cold and stiff. One vacant spot on the deck had been left, where the stove stood. The few passengers gathered round it, looking cold and surly. No friendly greetings passed. Each prepared to the other in language more energetic than polite that he should make a fire. The fire was at length made when a more cheerful feeling becomes manifest. Some prepared coffee, others regaled themselves on bread and whiskey

Much that is mean and despicable, coarse and